

Minutes of the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** of the Parish of Swanage, held at the Mowlem Community Room on **MONDAY, 9th MARCH 2015** at 7 o'clock p.m.

In the absence of Councillor Mrs Alison Patrick, Town Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Steve Poultney, assumed the Chair, and in addition to members of the Council and officials, approximately 21 persons were present.

Chairman – Councillor Steve Poultney (Deputy Mayor)

In attendance:-

Councillor Mrs. C. Bartlett
Councillor M. Bonfield
Councillor I. Brown
Councillor Mrs. G.A. Marsh
Councillor W.S. Trite
Councillor M. Whitwam
Councillor A. Wiggins

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| Mrs. K. Gallagher | Swanage Town & Community Partnership |
| Insp. Ernie Henley | Dorset Police |
| PCSO Ian Leslie | Dorset Police |
| Mr. M. Turnbull | Swanage Coastal Change Forum |
| Mrs. Jean Gibbs | Swanage Dementia Friendly Community |
| Dr Claire Lehman | Swanage Medical Practice |

Before the commencement of the Meeting, the Chairman explained that, with a view to attracting a wider audience, local organisations had been invited to make a short presentation on local issues and/or matters relating to their organisation, and he introduced the representatives that were present.

The Town Clerk then outlined the procedure that would be followed during the Meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies to report for inability to attend the Meeting.

2. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 9th April 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed. (Copies of the Minutes were circulated to those present at the Meeting).

3. **SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL**

The Chairman gave a brief summary of matters affecting the Town Council during the past year.

a) **Seafront Stabilisation Scheme**

As in the previous year, the Town Council's main focus had been on the Seafront and Downs Stabilisation Schemes.

One of the wettest winters on record had had an extremely disruptive impact on the stabilisation works. As a result of this wet weather, it

had been necessary to remove and re-site the war memorial in order to extend the groundworks to ensure the long-term stability of the Recreation Ground. Even when the rains stopped, the challenges facing the contractors continued, with WW2 phosphorous grenades being discovered, and later in the year, a skeleton was uncovered (which archaeologists confirmed was of an animal, and unlikely to be of any historic significance).

Finally, the main contract reached completion on 9th December 2014, and Swanage now has an impressive new set of public conveniences and showers, together with 60 beach huts and a smart refreshment kiosk.

Stabilisation of the Downs around Broad Road car park had also been completed.

An event to officially mark the completion of the scheme would be held along Shore Road on Saturday, 14th March, and everyone was invited to attend.

b) **Street Art or ‘Graffiti’ Wall**

In November the new street art, or ‘graffiti’ wall, at King George’s Playing Field was opened by the Mayor. This facility was built at no cost to the Council by the seafront contractors, Raymond Brown Ltd.

c) **Skate Park**

Another phase of skate park equipment had been installed, largely paid for by the incredible fundraising efforts of Mrs. Lorna Haines. It was anticipated that a final phase of equipment would be installed before the commencement of the 2015 summer season.

d) **Swanage Local Plan**

Work had been ongoing through the year on the Swanage Local Plan, a final draft of which would be put out for public consultation in the autumn. This allocated land for 200 houses outside of the current settlement boundary, allocated the station yard as the site for additional retail space and sets out policies to protect the character of a number of areas of the town.

e) **Grazing Land**

During the year the Town Council completed a lease to Dorset County Council of the former tip site and grazing land to the south, thereby increasing the acreage of Durlston Country Park and National Nature Reserve.

f) **Gas Drilling Proposals**

A plan by a gas drilling company, Infrastrata, to sink an exploratory well on land at California Quarry had proved to be controversial with a number of residents expressing concerns about the impact of such a proposal on the natural environment. Reassurance had also been sought and received from the company that they would not be using hydraulic fracturing on the site.

g) **Looking to the Future**

- The Council is working with the RNLI to enable them to deliver a new boathouse facility. A new long-term lease of the site had been agreed, together with closure of the boat park for the contractor's compound.
- The Council is working to support the health and wellbeing of local residents, and is fully supportive of the dedicated group of volunteers (Swanage Dementia Friendly Community) in making Swanage a dementia friendly town.
- In principle agreement had been given to a proposal put forward by Dorset Wildlife Trust for Prospect Nursery to be used as a therapeutic garden to support those with mental health problems.
- Continuation of work in respect of the provision of new youth changing facilities at Forres Field.

It was also reported that the Council was hoping to acquire the former St. Mark's School playing field from Dorset County Council; investigating moving its Depot from Kings Road West to the Purbeck Business Centre off Victoria Avenue; and exploring the best location for the Tourist Information Centre in light of extensive repairs required to the existing building.

In concluding the report, the Chairman expressed his appreciation of the sterling work and dedication of all members of the Town Council's staff.

4. **PRESENTATIONS**

The Chairman welcomed representatives from various organisations, and invited them to make presentations on behalf of the following groups:-

(a) **Swanage Town and Community Partnership**

Mrs. Kim Gallagher reported on the work of the Swanage Town and Community Partnership, a voluntary group which co-ordinated the views of local organisations. The Partnership continued to work closely with Purbeck District Council to develop the Swanage Local Plan, and also with the Swanage Development Trust.

Although in the early stages, the Swanage Development Trust was initiating discussions regarding the enhancement of the town centre and proposals for the possible redevelopment of specific areas.

(b) **Dorset Police**

Inspector Ernie Henley (Purbeck Neighbourhood Inspector) gave a brief outline of the work of the Safer Neighbourhood Officers, and sadly reported that as a result of cost-saving cuts by Dorset Police, the number of officers assigned to the Safer Neighbourhood service had been reduced.

The front desk counter services had been retained in Swanage, but unfortunately, due to the budgetary constraints within Dorset Police, the services previously provided at Wareham had been withdrawn and the police desk was now closed.

Although there had been a reduction in some services within Dorset Police, the infrastructure and administration procedures had been streamlined, resulting in greater improvements to the 101 telephone reporting system.

(c) **Swanage Coastal Change Forum**

Mr. Malcolm Turnbull gave a brief outline of the work undertaken by the Swanage Coastal Change Forum, a group supported by the Swanage Town Council, Purbeck District Council and the Environment Agency.

He then gave an explanation of how climate change could affect the tides, resulting in tidal surges and increased flooding concerns.

He reported that signs explaining the geology of the coastline had recently been erected at Sheps Hollow, Burlington Chine and Ocean Bay.

(d) **Swanage Dementia Friendly Community**

Mrs. Jean Gibbs, on behalf of the Swanage Dementia Friendly Community, gave a report on the successful launch of the group, and expressed her appreciation of the support given by the Town Council and many other organisations in the town.

She explained that the Swanage Dementia Friendly Community (SDFC) is an alliance of local community organisations and services that are working together to raise public awareness and understanding of dementia so that people with the disease, and their carers, are encouraged to seek help and are supported by the community.

(e) **Swanage Lights Committee**

Councillor Mrs. Bartlett reported that, as a result of fundraising undertaken by the Swanage Lights Committee, new LED festive lighting would shortly be installed along Shore Road.

(f) **Swanage Patients Participation Group**

On behalf of the Patients Participation Group, Councillor Mrs. Bartlett reported that two new doctors had joined the team at the Swanage Health Centre, and that the 'Sit and Wait' facility was working well

5. **GENERAL ISSUES**

The Mayor then opened the Meeting for general discussion, and invited questions and comments from the audience.

Matters raised included:-

- Plans for the 2015 Purbeck Marathon.
- A request that 'Proposals for future gas drilling at California Quarry' be re-instated as a regular item on the Council's monthly agenda, , and an enquiry as to whether any 'emergency strategy' was in place if the drilling is progressed.

Arising from the above, it was proposed by Mr. J. Haseildon and seconded by Ms. J. Gladding:-

That the Town Council converts its existing policy to make no comment in respect of applications in which it has an interest to one that requires a yes/no

decision on all policy/planning matters in order to ensure that the people of Swanage are represented on issues affecting land owned by the Town Council.

Upon being put to the Meeting, FIVE members of the public voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition, and TEN voted AGAINST, whereupon the Proposition was declared NOT CARRIED.

6. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was provisionally agreed that the next Parish Meeting be held on Wednesday, 23rd March 2016.

In conclusion, the Mayor thanked those present for their attendance, and closed the meeting at 8.35 p.m.
